



The Sabra Report

US Ambassador: Israel Can Make Its Own Decisions on Rules of Engagement

Tamar Uriel-Beri, Jerusalem Post, September 13th 2022

Recap:

Israel's rules of engagement come under scrutiny after the killing of a reporter in the West Bank. Rules of engagement define the circumstances under which a soldier can use live fire [1].

The Context:

- ✧ Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh was killed while covering a firefight between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian gunmen [2] despite wearing a bulletproof vest that was marked "press" [3].
- ✧ The Palestinian Authority (PA) initially refused Israel's request to launch a joint probe, but finally agreed to a forensic investigation of the bullet by the US [4]. The investigation determined Abu Akleh was most likely killed by "unintentional fire" from an Israeli soldier [5].
- ✧ The Biden administration rebuffed calls from Abu Akleh's family and progressive Democrats to conduct an independent investigation but called on Israel to review its rules of engagement [6].
- ✧ Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid expressed regret over Abu Akleh's death but shot back that "no one dictate[s] rules of engagement to us when we are the ones fighting for our lives [7]." The US ultimately walked back its request with Nides conceding that, "Israel is a sovereign country and will make their own decisions."
- ✧ Israel has carried out operations in PA-controlled areas of the West Bank for months as part of Operation Breakwater which was launched after a series of deadly attacks that killed 19 people earlier this year [8]. Israel blames the PA for not doing enough to crack down on terror while PA sympathizers say its ability to address security threats in the West Bank is hampered when its ties with Israel "are at a nadir."

Conversation Points:

- ✧ Why is American intervention in IDF soldiers' rules of engagement dangerous?
- ✧ Why is it important to separate political considerations from defense decisions?
- ✧ Should journalists be present in war? Why?

Notes:

1. [Report: US asked Israel to review IDF's rules of engagement](#), Israel National News, August 18th, 2022
2. [US appears to back off pressuring Israel on IDF rules of engagement after backlash](#), Jacob Magid, Times of Israel, September 14th, 2022
3. [Israel rejects U.S. call for review of IDF rules of engagement in West Bank](#), Barak Ravid, Axios, September 7th, 2022
4. [Report: US asked Israel to review IDF's rules of engagement](#), Israel National News, August 18th, 2022
5. [Israel rejects U.S. call for review of IDF rules of engagement in West Bank](#), Barak Ravid, Axios, September 7th, 2022
6. [US appears to back off pressuring Israel on IDF rules of engagement after backlash](#), Jacob Magid, Times of Israel, September 14th, 2022
7. [Israel rejects U.S. call for review of IDF rules of engagement in West Bank](#), Barak Ravid, Axios, September 7th, 2022.
8. [US appears to back off pressuring Israel on IDF rules of engagement after backlash](#), Jacob Magid, Times of Israel, September 14th, 2022

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